

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8680

C O N F I D E N T I A L SAN JOSE 4510

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR PGOV CS

SUBJECT: CITIZENS GROUP CALLS FOR VESCO OUSTER

1. IN A 30-MINUTE BROADCAST TO THE NATION OVER A NATIONAL TELEVISION HOOK-UP AT 7:30 LAST NIGHT (NOVEMBER 26), PROMINENT AND RESPECTED UNIVERSITY PROFESSOR MARIA DENGÓ, WHO IS ALSO AN IMPORTANT PLN PERSONALITY, READ A MANIFESTO ADDRESSED TO PRESIDENT ODUBER AND THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY DEPUTIES ASKING THAT VESCO BE EXPELLED FROM COSTA RICA. THE NAMES OF THE DOCUMENT'S SIGNERS, NUMBERING MORE THAN 200 AND COMPRISING A BLUE RIBBON CROSS SECTION OF COSTA RICA'S POLITICAL ELITE WITH SPECIAL EMPHASIS ON THE DISTINGUISHED PLN MEMBERS, WERE READ OFF FOLLOWING HER READING OF THE MANIFESTO.

2. THE MANIFESTO CATALOGUED MANY OF THE ALLEGED ACTIVITIES OF ROBERT VESCO IN COSTA RICA INCLUDING HIS TRAFFICKING IN ARMS, HIS ASSOCIATIONS WITH MAFIA AND UNDERWORLD TYPES, HIS USE OF A LARGE PRIVATE SECURITY FORCE, AND HIS OWNERSHIP OF A NATIONWIDE COMMUNICATIONS NETWORK. IT ACCUSED VESCO OF UNDERMINING THE MORALITY OF THE COUNTRY BY CORRUPTING POLITICIANS AND OTHERS WITH HIS IMMENSE ILLICITLY GAINED FORTUNE. THE MANIFESTO ALSO MENTIONED THAT BECAUSE OF VESCO'S PRESENCE IN COSTA RICA THE COUNTRY HAS GAINED AN INTERNATIONAL REPUTATION AS A REFUGE FOR CRIM-

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INALS AND UNDESIRABLES AND IT NOTED REPORTS THAT THE

PERPETRATORS OF A RECENT BANK ROBBERY INTENDED
TO FLEE TO COSTA RICA.

3. THE MANIFESTO WAS REPORTEDLY DELIVERED TO THE
CASA PRESIDENCIAL IN THE LATE AFTERNOON PRIOR TO THE
BROADCAST. THERE HAS BEEN NO ANNOUNCEMENT FROM THE
CASA PRESIDENCIAL OR OFFICIALLY CONNECTED NEWS ORGANS AL-
THOUGH "LA HORA" MADE A HALF-HEARTED ATTEMPT TO DILUTE
THE IMPACT OF THE BROADCAST BY ANNOUNCING TWO DAYS AGO
THAT A MOVEMENT AGAINST VESCO WAS UNDERWAY AND
INCLUDED THE NAMES OF SIGNIFICANT PARTICIPANTS.
YESTERDAY'S EDITION OF "LA PRENSA LIBRE" CARRIED AN
ANONYMOUS LETTER ON WHAT WAS PURPORTED TO BE
DEPARTMENT OF STATE LETTERHEAD TO AN UNKNOWN ADDRESSEE.
THIS FRAUDULENT LETTER (REPORTED SEPTEL) IS BELIEVED ALSO TO BE PART
OF A VESCO-CONNECTED EFFORT TO DISCREDIT THE CITIZENS'
CAMPAIGN.

4. PUBLIC INTEREST STIRRED UP BY THE ANTI-VESCO
CAMPAIGN HAS ALSO HAD ITS EFFECT UPON THE NATIONAL
ASSEMBLY WHICH WAS TO HAVE DEBATED A BILL TO REFORM
THE VESCO EXTRADITION LAW. NOW MOST DEPUTIES WHO
HAD BEEN BACKING THE EXTRADITION BILL REFORM HAVE REFOCUSED
THEIR ATTENTION ON A PENDING PRD MOTION OF LAST MAY WHICH
CALLED FOR THE OUTRIGHT EXPULSION OF VESCO UNDER AN
OLD LAW PERMITTING UNDESIRABLE ELEMENTS TO BE EXPELLED
FROM THE COUNTRY. OPPOSITION GROUPS, PROBABLY SUPPORTED
BY SOME PLN DEPUTIES, WILL TRY TO CAPITALIZE UPON
PUBLIC OPINION TO PASS A MOTION RECOMMENDING THAT THE
EXECUTIVE EXPEL VESCO.

5. WE ANTICIPATE CONSIDERABLE MEDIA PLAY OF THIS
MANIFESTO AND OTHER ANTI-VESCO NEWS IN THE COMING DAYS
LEADING UP TO THE MAIN EVENT OF NEXT WEEK--THE MARCH ON
VESCO'S HOUSE.
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